



## Rotation of Panchayat Seats Between Men and Women

### Why in News

The Haryana government is planning to bring a Bill to provide **50:50 reservation** in [Panchayati Raj Institutions \(PRIs\)](#) for men and women candidates, and rotate the seats between male and female representatives after each term.

### Key Points

- Men and women will be able to contest panchayat polls under the **odd-even formula**. This will be implemented for sarpanches and members of village wards, block samitis and zila parishads.
- **Benefit:** This will ensure equal opportunities for men and women, and women from all constituencies will have fair share in terms of reservation.
- **Limitations:** Policy of reservation for only one term and rotation of reserved seats and posts of chairperson can **hinder the consolidation of leadership qualities** among women representatives as it takes time for them to learn the skills of handling and negotiating various conflicting interests within the panchayat.
  - To deal with this issue, some states like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Karnataka have made provisions for **two term reservation of seats at PRIs**.
- Haryana previously enacted **Haryana Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Act, 2015** laying down eligibility criteria to be able to contest Panchayat elections in the state.
  - It included **disqualification** in case of **non-completion of minimum educational criteria** (like class X pass for general category and Class 8<sup>th</sup> for SC), **non-payment of arrears and debts** to co-operative banks or electricity bills, and **not having functional toilets** at home.
  - The Supreme Court upheld this decision arguing that prescription of an educational qualification is not irrelevant for better administration. Also, the criteria of insolvency and toilets will encourage good practices among legislators.
- **Constitutional Provisions for Women Representation in PRIs:**
  - The **73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** mandates **33.3% reservation** for women in PRIs across the country.
    - The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment envisages the [Gram Sabha](#) as the foundation of the Panchayat Raj System to perform functions and powers entrusted to it by the State Legislatures.
    - This has been increased to **50% reservation** in several states like Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar etc.
    - Out of the 30.41 lakh elected representatives of PRIs, 13.74 lakh (**45.2%**) are women.
  - **Article 15 (3)** to the Constitution of India empowers the State to make **special provisions for women**.
  - **Article 243D** provides that **one-third of the total number of seats and offices** of the Chairpersons in PRIs at each level shall be reserved for women to be allotted by **rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat**.

- Such reservations of seats and offices of the chairpersons for women are also within the reservations for SCs and STs in all three tiers of PRIs.
- In order to bring about 50% reservation for women in Panchayats in all States, the **110<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Bill** was introduced in the Lok Sabha in **2009**, but it was **not passed** despite being tabled several times.
- **Challenges Before Women in PRIs**
  - **Patriarchy:** Many women are not allowed to contest elections and many continue to work as proxies for their male family members. Their male co-workers show **insensitivity** and may refuse to cooperate. Burden of **household responsibilities, purdah (veil) system and domestic violence** negatively affect their functioning.
  - **Inadequate Capacities:** Majority of women representatives enter into public life for the first time and do **not have enough knowledge and skills** to handle affairs of panchayats. Training programmes conducted by government training agencies are unable to cover all elected representatives in time.
  - **Violent Opposition:** Women often face **more resistance from the community** if they want to take bold steps. They are also subjected to violence from powerful elements of the society.
  - **Two Child Norm:** A few States like **Odisha and Rajasthan have the two child norm** for contesting panchayat elections. In rural areas women hardly have any say in the number of children in the family and such laws restrict their entry into panchayats.
  - **Caste System:** Hierarchical caste system in rural India makes it difficult for women from SC and ST communities to work independently and effectively.
  - **Lack of Women at Other Levels:** Lack of women coworkers and at higher administrative level also hinders the free functioning of women representatives.
- **Efforts by Government to Promote Women in PRIs:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has been making continuous efforts by launching and implementing various schemes for capacity building of women representatives in PRIs, like
  - **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)**
    - **RGSA** was launched in 2018 for developing and strengthening the capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for rural local governance to become more responsive towards **local development needs**, preparing the **participatory plans** that leverage technology, efficient and **optimum utilization of available resources** for realizing sustainable solutions to local problems linked to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
    - It included rewards for ensuring women participation in PRIs
  - **Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)**
    - Some of the **key aspects of GPDP guidelines that are relevant to Women Empowerment include** proactive participation of women in budgeting, planning, implementation and monitoring of GPDP and convening Mahila Sabhas prior to the general Gram Sabhas and their inclusion in Gram Sabhas and GPDP.
  - **Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA)**
    - It was implemented from the year 2007-08 till 2012-13 with the broad objective of empowerment of Elected Women & Youth Representatives of Panchayats.
  - Recently, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has directed all the States and Union Territories to organise **Special Gram Sabhas and Mahila Sabhas (Women's Assemblies)** in all **Gram Panchayats**

## Way Forward

- The current proposal is a welcome step. However, the government must bear in mind that equality in representation is not enough to ensure socio-political equity among genders, as the relatively disadvantaged position of women must be taken into account.
- Increasing women in PRIs will increase the probability of their better **representation in parliament**, which as of now is only 14%. To further promote women participation in PRIs,

emphasis must be made for gender sensitization of male elected representatives and functionaries of PRIs.

- In capacity building of women representatives, governments must also invite and involve civil society organizations, women's groups, academic institutions, corporate social responsibility foundations and also international organizations like UNWomen. A **multi-stakeholder, collaborative, multi-pronged, systematic effort** to enhance the capacities of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) are required.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Concerns Over DNA Technology Regulation Bill

### Why in News

According to the draft report of the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology**, the [DNA Technology \(Use and Application\) Regulation Bill, 2018](#) could be misused for **caste or community-based profiling**.

### Key Points

#### ▪ Key Provisions:

- The Bill allows the use of the technology to establish the identity of persons in matters of **crime, parentage dispute, emigration or immigration and transplantation of human organs**.
- It provides for establishment of **national and regional DNA data banks** and each databank will maintain **crime scene index, suspects' or undertrials' index and offenders' index** separately.

#### ▪ Background:

- A similar bill was passed in **Lok Sabha** in **2018** but could **not be passed in the Rajya Sabha**.
- The 2019 Bill was referred to the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests** for examination.

#### ▪ Concerns Raised by the Committee:

##### ◦ Misuse of Sensitive Information:

- The **DNA profiles** can reveal **extremely sensitive information** of an individual such as family ancestry (pedigree), skin colour, behaviour, illness, health status and susceptibility to diseases.
- Access to such intrusive information can be misused to specifically target individuals and their families with their own genetic data.
- It could even be used to incorrectly **link a particular caste/community to criminal activities**.

##### ◦ Storage of DNA Profiles of Unconvicted Persons:

- The Bill proposes to store DNA profiles of **suspects, undertrials, victims and their relatives** for future investigations.
- The Bill also provides that **DNA profiles for civil matters** will also be stored in the data banks, but **without a clear and separate index**.
- The committee has questioned the necessity for storage of such DNA profiles, pointing out that this **violates the fundamental right to privacy** and does not serve

any public purpose.

- **Perfunctory Consent:**

- The Bill refers to consent in several provisions, but in each of those, a magistrate can easily **override consent**, thereby in effect, making consent perfunctory.
- There is also no guidance in the Bill on the grounds and reasons of when the magistrate can override consent.

- **Removal of DNA Profiles of Accused:**

- The Bill permits **retention of DNA** found at a crime scene in perpetuity, even if conviction of the offender has been overturned.
- The committee has recommended that independent scrutiny must be done of the proposals to **destroy biological samples and remove DNA profiles from the database.**

- **Absence of Robust Data Protections**

- The committee has also called the Bill “premature” and questioned the **security of a huge number of DNA profiles** that will be placed with the **National DNA Data bank** and its regional centres.

- **Need of the Bill:**

- DNA testing is currently being done on an **extremely limited scale in India**, with approximately 30-40 DNA experts in 15-18 laboratories undertaking less than 3,000 cases per year, which represent **2-3% of the total need.**
- The standards of the DNA testing laboratories are not monitored or regulated, in absence of any proper regulation.
- The Bill will enable **identification of missing children.**

- As per the [National Crime Records Bureau](#), annually 1,00,000 children go missing.

- The Bill will also help in identifying unidentified **deceased, including disaster victims and apprehend repeat offenders for heinous crimes such as rape and murder.**
- Over the concerns of misuse it is being said that any and every blood sample collected by a clinical laboratory has the same potential for misuse.

- **Global Scenario Regarding DNA Profiling:**

- According to US Interpol’s **Global DNA Profiling Survey Results 2016**, as many as **69** countries have a national DNA database, including the USA, Canada and China.
  - The countries hold genetic information of at least 35,413,155 individuals.
  - Different countries have different regulations for collection, removal and retention of DNA samples.
- **Declaration on Human Genetic Data**, which was adopted unanimously at [UNESCO's 32<sup>nd</sup> General Conference](#) on 16 October 2003, aims to ensure the respect of human dignity and protection of human rights and fundamental freedom in collection, processing, use and storage of human genetic data and biological samples.

- **Genome India Project (GIP):** Recently, the **Ministry of Science and Technology** also approved an ambitious gene-mapping project called the [Genome India Project \(GIP\)](#) which aims to sample and sequence 10,000 genomes in the first phase from across India, to arrive at a **representative Indian genome.**

- Gene Mapping is **different from DNA profiling** as DNA profiling uses small stretches of DNA to identify an individual while gene mapping involves sequencing the whole genome. Gene Mapping is done for scientific and medical uses while DNA profiling is done primarily for forensic and criminal investigation.

## Way Forward

- Although DNA can be an important tool in solving crimes, using DNA effectively during criminal

investigations requires **proper crime scene examination, trained and reliable policing, a trusted chain of custody of samples, reliable analysis, and proper use of expert evidence in court.** Thus, oversight of both laboratory quality assurance and crime scene examination need to be ensured. Also, keeping the civilian and criminal DNA Database separate is necessary.

- Prior adoption of a privacy or [data protection bill](#) would allow individuals some recourse if their rights were not protected. This is particularly important, especially following the Supreme Court's [Right to Privacy](#) judgment.
- The government also needs to do a **cost-benefit analysis** as creating large databases is often not a cost-effective way to solve more crimes, and limited resources must be targeted effectively.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Agri Profits and Farmers' Income

### Why in News

A detailed analysis of 25 key field and horticultural crops done by the [rating agency Crisil](#) has indicated that **per hectare profitability will improve 3-5% year-on-year to Rs. 10,000** in the [Kharif \(Summer Crop\) Season 2020](#).

- However, economists say that individual farmers are unlikely to see any hike in their own income.

### Key Points

- **Profits are Expected in the Agriculture Sector:** Agriculture is one of the few bright spots in an economy ravaged by Covid-19, with good rains expected to boost production and profits, especially in the paddy crop.
  - To support farmers in effectively undertaking the post-harvest rabi produce and preparatory work for kharif crops, **Rs. 30,000 crore additional emergency working capital fund through NABARD** and **Rs. 2 lakh crore of concessional credit** have been provided by the government.
  - The agriculture sector showed **growth of 5.9% in the last quarter of 2019-2020**.
- **Impact on the Farmers' Income:** Some economists have opined that despite a hike in overall profits, **per capita (per farmer) income may see a dip**.
  - **Reverse migration due to Covid-19** may have resulted in the number of people employed in the agriculture sector this summer rising by up to 16% over farm employment in 2019.
  - As per the [data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy \(CMIE\)](#), the farm sector gained 14.9 million jobs in the April-July 2020 period.
- **Possible Reasons Behind Reduced Income of Farmers:**
  - **Reverse Migration:** Because of the Covid lockdown, large numbers of people have gone back to rural areas, and apart from [MGNREGA](#) and agriculture, there is not any significant work.
  - **Agriculture as an Employment Option:** In general, people just migrate out of farming, mostly voluntarily, in search for better paying employment. But, people who can, do migrate into farming when they lose non-farming jobs.
    - CMIE data shows that 111.3 million people declared their occupation as farming in 2019-20. By March 2020, this had increased to 117 million, shooting up to 130

million in June.

- **Demand for Labour:** Till the sowing season ends in August, there will remain demand for farm labour.
  - This means, even if there is an increase in farm profits, it will not help in reviving rural demand, as too many people are dependent on farm income this year.
- **Rise in Covid-19 cases in Rural India:** There could be an adverse impact on harvesting and supply chains.
- **Decrease in the Prices of the Produce:**
  - Whether growth in agricultural output also implies growth in the income of farmers depends on a lot of things. Most importantly, it depends on the prices received by farmers for the produce that they sell.
  - While **cereal prices** continue to show **positive inflation**, most other food groups, such as **fruits and vegetables, eggs, poultry and fish**, continue to see **prices decline**.
  - Further, with **input prices also rising**, most small and marginal farmers are likely to witness a decline in incomes rather than an increase.
- **Steps Taken by the Government:**
  - The **three ordinances** introduced under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme** in May 2020 - Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance - will give the farmers the benefit of 'my crop, my right' and help them gain higher prices for their produce.
  - Launch of **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs.1 lakh crore** by the Prime Minister for setting up cold chains, refrigerated transportation, etc. will help farmers command better prices.
    - These structural reforms will go a long way in reviving India's rural ecosystem.

## Way Forward

- Initiatives undertaken by MNCs such as '**e-choupal**' by **ITC Limited** which enables rural India with technical know-how for an effective agri ecosystem and facilitates transparent mechanism for price discovery should be encouraged.
- Government should consolidate and leverage the **CSC (Common Service Center)** pan India network. It should also focus on promoting cottage industries, provide better amenities in terms of health care, education, road network, communication and power so that the rural population can also be in a position to access quality life on par with the urban sector. This will also lessen migration towards cities in search of job opportunities.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Credit Guarantee for NBFC-MFIs

### Why in News

Recently, the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has introduced **Partial Credit Guarantee Programme** for **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) - Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)**.

- The programme aims to ensure unhindered flow of credit in rural areas hit by the **Covid-19**

[pandemic.](#)

## Key Points

### ▪ Programme:

- Under the programme, NABARD will provide **partial guarantee on pooled loans** extended to small and mid-sized MFIs.
  - This has come in the backdrop of most **MFIs being excluded from the [moratorium benefits from banks](#)**, creating a dip in collections, resulting in widening asset-liability mismatch, credit downgrades and spike in cost of fresh funding.
- NABARD will facilitate Rs. 2,500 crore funding in the initial phase and will further increase the funding.
- The program is expected to cover over 1 million households across 28 states and 650 districts.

### ▪ Implementation:

- NABARD has signed agreements with **Vivriti Capital and Ujjivan [Small Finance Bank](#)** to roll out the initiative.
  - Vivriti Capital is a non-banking financial corporation.

### ▪ Benefits:

- The partially guaranteed loan facility will **catalyse much-needed financing to millions of households, agricultural and business markets** to sustain in the post Covid-19 environment.
  - MFIs operate in rural hinterlands and serve farmers, traders, rural businesses and households.

### ▪ Pooled Loan Issuance (PLI):

- Under a PLI structure, a bank or an NBFC (Principal Lender), provides loans to identified Microfinance Institutions/other NBFCs/corporates (Borrowers).
- Each of these loans are made as per terms agreed upon between the Principal Lender and the Borrowers in keeping with the Principal Lenders underwriting and credit evaluation practices.
- The loans offered are pooled together and credit enhanced by way of a common partial guarantee offered by identified guarantors to the structure.
- The **PLI structure provides the lending bank adequate comfort through the guarantor's partial credit protection**, it also **reduces cost of capital** as the rating of the loans get increased and helps lenders meet priority sector goals.

## Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institution

- The NBFC-MFI is a **non-deposit taking financial company**.
- Conditions to qualify as NBFC-MFI:
  - Minimum Net Owned Funds (NOF) of Rs. 5 crore.
  - At least 85% of its Net Assets in the nature of **Qualifying Assets**.
    - The Qualifying Assets are those assets which have a substantial period of time to be ready for its intended use or sale.
- The difference between an NBFC-MFI and other NBFC is that while other NBFCs can operate at a very high level but MFIs cater to only the smaller level of social strata, with need of smaller amounts as loans.

## Way Forward

NBFC-MFI plays a crucial role in sustaining consumption demand as well as capital formation in the smaller level of strata, thus it is essential that they continue to get funding without disruption, and the partial credit guarantee programme is expected to systematically enable the same.

[Source: TH](#)

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# Super Apps in India

## Why In News

Recently, the Tata Group is planning to get into aggregating its consumer offerings in an **all-in-one super app**.

## Key Points

- A super app is an **omnichannel digital platform**, i.e.- a platform developed by a company offering various services and products under one umbrella.
  - **For example**, China's WeChat, which started out as a messaging app, expanded into payments, cabs, shopping, food ordering, cab services to become a super app.
- A physical world analogy of a super app would be a **mall**, which allows retail space to various brands and shops across businesses and verticals.
- There are **two concept of super app** emergence:
  - The concept of super app first emerged in **China and southeast Asia** where internet companies like WeChat, Go-Jek and Grab evolved their apps into versatile feature apps.
    - **Customer Traffic to Services:** These companies used the opportunity of customer traffic on their platforms that **originally came as social media** by offering additional services leading to **increased revenue realisations**.
  - A different approach is followed in the **west Asia region**.
    - **Services to Target Customer:** The traditional business conglomerates with a large portfolio with a presence in shopping malls, grocery and entertainment are building digital assets. These businesses observe high customer footfall and high repeat purchase frequency.

## Advantages of Super Apps

- **For Businesses:**
  - **Higher Revenue:** It ensures **increased revenue realization** due to consolidation of services at one place.
  - **Control over Data:** It provides to companies a **large amount of consumer data**.
    - Such a large amount of data can be harnessed **to learn more about user behaviour**.
  - **Market Access:** It enables domestic and foreign retailers to easily get access to the market.
- **For consumers:**
  - **Convenience:** It shortens the way to the desired action.
  - **Diverse Services:** It offers a variety of services.
  - **Easy experience:** It allows for a uniform and individual user experience.
  - **Less Load on Phone:** It saves phone memory compared to what it is in the case of multiple apps.

## Concerns about Super Apps



- **Monopoly:** The very concept of a conglomerate trying to keep a customer within its own ecosystem for most services they might require increases the possibility of a **monopoly**.
  - The data collected by the master app **could then be used to train machines in artificial intelligence** which can be used either way.
- **Risk to Financial Systems:** Super Apps are disintermediating banks from their customers, which is not healthy for a financial system unless formal regulations are not in place concerning such apps.
- **Issue with Device:** A large chunk of India's smartphone market belongs to lower-end smartphones, most of which come with a space crunch.
- **Language Issue:** India is a multi-linguistic nation. So a super app must use vernacular language to increase consumer reach.
- **Privacy:** Concerns of privacy in cases where a super app has onboarded third-party service providers.

## Indian Experience

- Main reasons why Indian companies are looking at building super apps are:
  - Relatively large base of the population is smartphones first instead of desktop.
    - India's smartphone base is estimated around 450 million (2020) and it is expected to reach 820 million in the next two years.
  - The ecosystem of apps customised to local needs has not yet evolved.
- **Few Examples:**
  - **Jio umbrella** of Reliance Industries has consolidated various services and offerings such as shopping, content streaming, groceries, payments, cloud storage services, etc.
  - Paytm has also brought together services like payments, ticket bookings, games, online shopping, banking, consumer finance, etc into one app.

[Source IE](#)

## AIIB Loan for MUTP-3

### Why In News

The **Government of India**, the Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation and the [Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank \(AIIB\)](#) have signed a loan agreement for a **USD 500 million** for **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III**.

### Key Points

- **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III (MUTP-3):** It is a project supervised and implemented by the **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority** to enhance the network capacity, service quality and safety of Mumbai's suburban railway system. The **deadline** for completion of MUTP-3 is **2022**.
  - **Major Objectives:**
    - Improve traffic and transportation situation in Mumbai Metropolitan Region.
    - Institutional development and strengthening.
  - **Expected Benefits:**

- The Project is expected to **increase network capacity** in the region and thus will improve mobility.
- There will be a **reduction in journey time and fatal accidents** of commuters.
  - There will be direct safety benefits to passengers and the public through the introduction of **trespass control measures**.
- It is estimated that among primary beneficiaries of the project, **22% are female passengers who will benefit from improved safety and quality of service**.
- It will also help in **reducing carbon emissions** by shifting passengers away from higher-carbon road transport towards efficient and convenient rail-based mobility.

#### ▪ **Need:**

- The **population's explosive growth** represents the core driver behind Mumbai's urban expansion. It is compelling to prioritize sound urban and infrastructure planning.
  - With a population of 22.8 million (2011), Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is the most populous metropolitan region in India and is expected to reach 29.3 million by 2031 and 32.1 million by 2041.
- Around **86%** of Mumbai commuters rely on public transport.
  - The Mumbai suburban railway network **carries three-quarters of all motorized travel** (8 million passengers per day).
  - User experience remains compromised by the **low amenity of carriages, substandard stations and station access**, and serious **safety concerns**.
    - Between **2002-2012**, there were more on average, **9.9 fatalities per day** on the Mumbai suburban railway network.
    - A key reason for accidents and deaths is **trespassing and overcrowding** of both stations and train cars.

#### **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank**

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a **multilateral development bank** with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia. It was established in **December 2015**.
- It is **headquartered in Beijing (China)** and began its operations in **January 2016**.
- It has **103 members including India**.
  - India is among the founding members of AIIB.
- **China is the largest shareholder** in AIIB with a 26.6% voting power, followed by India with a 7.62% voting power.

#### **AIIB Support to India**

- India is the largest beneficiary of AIIB financing for infrastructure projects. The AIIB has approved some major projects in India. These are:
  - Bangalore Metro Rail Project (USD 335 million).
  - Gujarat Rural Roads (MMGSY) Project (USD 329 million).
  - India Infrastructure Fund.
  - Andhra Pradesh 24x7 - Power For All Project.
  - USD 750 Million for Covid-19 support for India.

# India's Longest River Ropeway in Assam

## Why in News

The **Assam government** has inaugurated a **1.8-km ropeway across the Brahmaputra river**, and described it as India's longest river ropeway.

## // BRAHMAPUTRA & OTHER ROPEWAYS

**1.8 km**

Between Guwahati city and North Guwahati town, across the river Brahmaputra.

**2.5 km**

In Gulmarg, J&K. One of the world's highest (4,390 m) cable-based lift services.

**4 km**

In Auli in Uttarakhand, said to be the longest in the country (not a river ropeway)

**2 km**

In Darjeeling, West Bengal, one of the oldest ropeway services in India, started 1968).

## Key Points

### ▪ About the Ropeway:

- Built at the cost of **Rs. 56 crore**, it extends from **Central to Northern Guwahati**. It takes **eight minutes** to traverse the entire length of the ropeway.
- It passes over the mid-river **Peacock Island** that houses **Umananda**, a medieval Shiva temple.
- According to the government, this is **one of the most advanced & longest river crossing Aerial Tramway systems in India**.

- Aerial tramways are particularly well-suited in extreme terrain since the towers can be erected at larger intervals.

### ▪ Need:

- **Thousands of people commute every day** between the capital city of Guwahati and the town of North Guwahati, where IIT Guwahati is located.
- Other travel options between the two banks are by ferry (30 minutes or more, depending on current and season) or by road through a bridge that usually takes over an hour in the traffic.

### ▪ Other Benefits:

- Apart from substantially reducing travel time, the ropeway will provide a **breathtaking view of the Brahmaputra river** and **promote tourism** in the State.
- Tourists can take the ropeway to North Guwahati and spend quality time on that side. Hospitality services will also develop on that side and thus the ropeway is expected to be an overall boost for tourism in the city.
- Further, the ropeway is considered as a **convenient and non-polluting means of transport**, as well as a **source of environmentally friendly tourism**.
- It is ecologically sustainable as it is run by electric power protecting the beauty of the area, while simultaneously providing passengers with a comfortable and speedy means of travel.

## Odisha's Bonda Tribe

### Why in News

Recently, four people from the **Bonda tribal community** have tested positive for the [Covid-19](#).



### Key Points

- **PVTGs:** Bondas are one of the 13 [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups \(PVTGs\)](#) found in Odisha.
  - There are a **total of 75 PVTGs in India**.
- **Austroasiatic Tribes:** Bondas are members of a group of **Austroasiatic tribes**, they are believed to be **part of the first wave of migration out of Africa** about 60,000 years ago. They are the **first forest settlers in India**.
- **Culture:** The Bondas have **retained their identity and culture** despite external interventions over the years.
  - **Primarily forest dwellers,** the Bondas used to hunt and forage for food in the wild.
  - **Matriarchal society-**The women prefer to marry men who are younger by at least 5-10 years, so that the men can earn for them when they grow old.
  - **Unique dressing style-** Women are semi clad and wear various types of rings and necklaces around their bodies, while the men carry lethal bows and arrows.
  - **Language-** They continue to speak in their **language, Remo**, which comes under the Austroasiatic language belonging to the Mundari group.
    - The Mundari group of languages are spoken by **Munda people**.
- **Division:** The Bonda tribe is divided into two groups based on their settlement:
  - The **Upper Bondas** living in the inaccessible forests.
  - The **Lower Bondas** in the plains.
- **Tribes in Odisha:**

- Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities — the **largest diverse groups of tribal population in India**.
  - Thirteen of them are PVTGs— **Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dungaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora**.
- Tribal populations are found in the **entire seven districts of Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada**, and in parts of six other districts.

[Source: TH](#)

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